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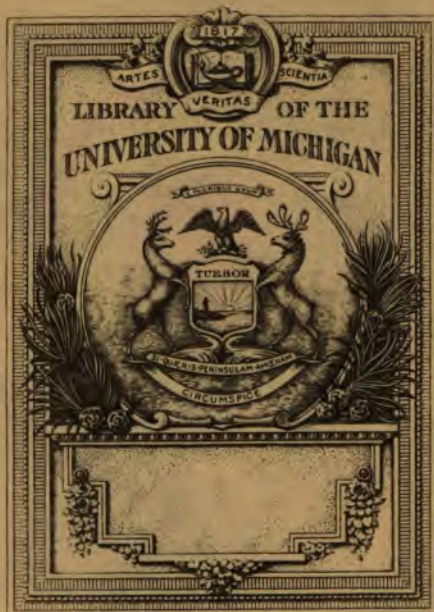
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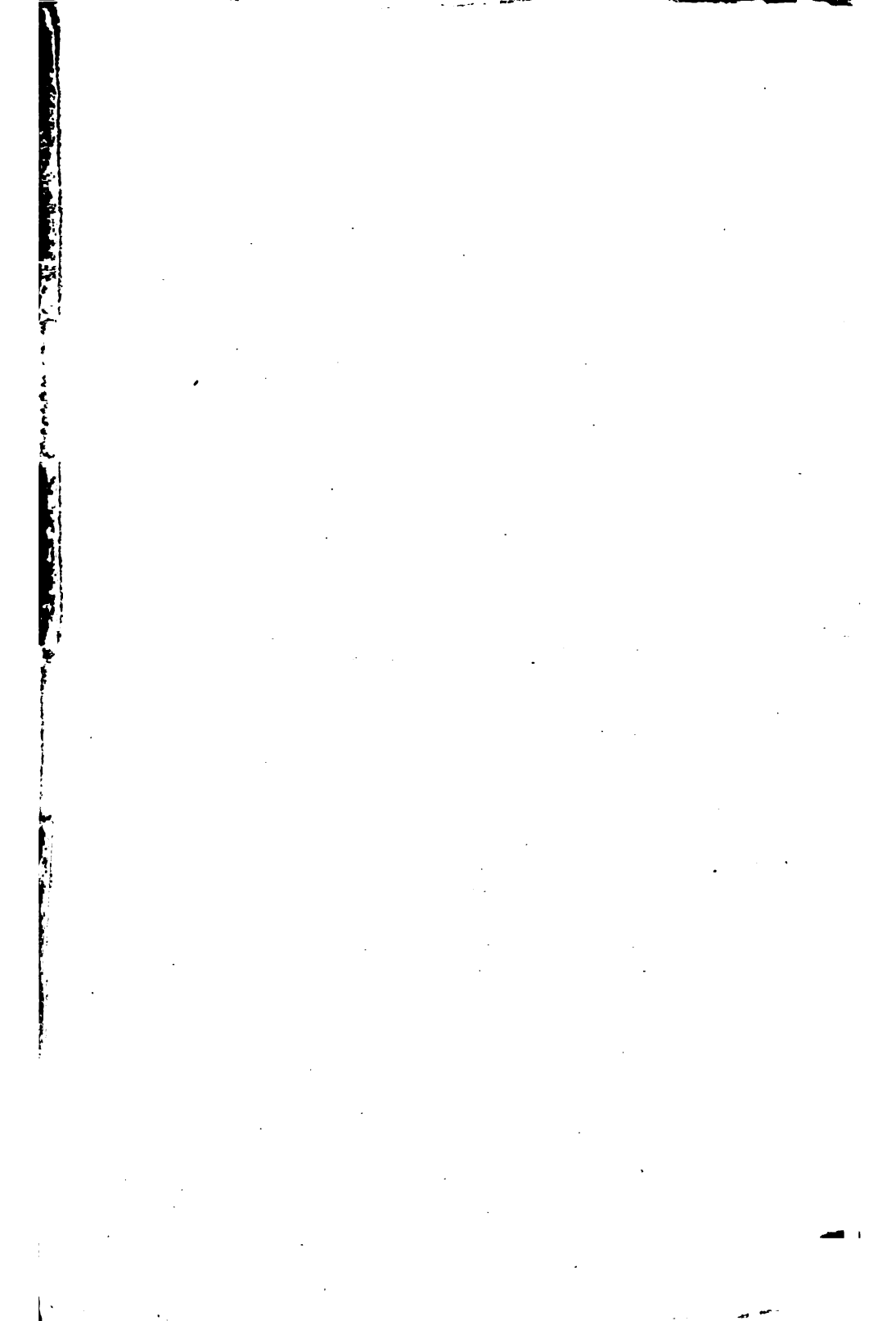
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# BACONIAN FACTS

AN EPILOGUE

TO THE

FARCE

OF

“BACON vs. SHAKESPEARE”

“Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure.”—*Bacon*.

BOSTON

LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS

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1890

Writes, Alfred

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WORCESTER, MASS. :

FRANKLIN P. RICE, *Publisher*.

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“If I am  
Traduced by ignorant tongues, which neither know  
My faculties nor person, yet will be  
The chronicles of my doing, let me say  
'Tis but the fate of place, and the rough brake  
That virtue must go through.”

—*Shakespeare.*



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## BACONIAN FACTS.

A late recruit to the Baconian ranks, has seen fit to announce his conversion in a pamphlet entitled,

### FACTS THAT CONVERTED ME FROM SHAKESPEARE TO BACON.

The pamphlet is indulgently termed "A BRIEF for the Plaintiff, in an action of ejectment, now on trial" before "THE TRIBUNAL OF HISTORY" ("BACON *vs.* SHAKESPEARE"). Its author, as Counsel for Plaintiff, asserts a claim which the plaintiff consistently refused to entertain. That the plaintiff was prudent, when he said he did "not profess to be a poet,"\* is irrefutably sustained by the dramatic compositions and the "poetry" which he acknowledged to be his, and since he was a better lawyer than his counsel, and, at least, as wise a man, there would seem to be very little for "THE TRIBUNAL OF HISTORY" to decide.

As a legal document, the "Brief" would have astonished Bacon. As an instrument of conversion, it must amuse every one who examines it. It swarms with concessions that have never been "conceded," and with statements that are not true. The counsel for Bacon has brilliantly emulated the least desirable acquirements of the late Right Honorable Henry Dundas, who resorted to his memory for his fiction, and to his imagination for his facts.

If a man is converted, his facts should be true. If the "facts"

\*Apology concerning Essex.



prove to be fiction, his conversion proves him to be silly. The statements which the counsel for the plaintiff has, unintentionally perhaps, disguised under a respectable *alias*, have not been, by him, subjected to the scantest scrutiny. His authorities have scarcely been vouchsafed the courtesy of a passing glance.

The motto which is prefixed to the "Brief" is in these words :

"Truth is like a torch : The more it's shook, it shines."

If the pamphlet does not exhibit the illuminating influence of the Torch, it is doubtless because it has not yet been "shook". We may, therefore, be pardoned if, in the interest of Truth, we now proceed to shake the "Brief" to aid in producing the promised result.

The "Brief" commences with the assertion :—"It is conceded that the author of the Shakespeare Plays was not only the greatest genius of his age, but a man of most profound and varied scholarship."

The extent of the literary attainments of the author of the Plays has been, and is, a disputed question. Some writers have contended that his acquirements were extensive ; others, such as Dr. Farmer, have proved that the plays are full of historical and other errors.\*

Ben Jonson would have been properly described as a man of "most profound and varied scholarship," but no one conversant with the facts has ever contended that the author of the Shakespeare Plays was the peer of Jonson in learning. Jonson knew Shakespeare, knew the extent of Shakespeare's scholarship, knew that he had

"Little Latin and less Greek."

But it nowhere appears that Jonson found in that, any reason to doubt that William Shakespeare was the author of the Plays which were called his, or to question the possibility of Shakespeare's

\* Staunton, Shaks. xiv.

obtaining the plots of his plays from any source whatever ; and it must be admitted that Shakespeare's contemporaries were better qualified to determine this question than are a whole continent of hypothetists three centuries removed. Now, how do the Baconians overcome this difficulty? By affirming that there are no contemporary references to Shakespeare or his works. An assertion which, as we shall see, is sublimely unveracious.

The author of the "Brief" informs us, that "many of the Plays were based on Greek, Spanish and Italian productions, which had not then been translated into English." "Many" signifies a large number. The learned counsel should have enumerated a dozen or so.

Now, the fact is that before Shakespeare was six years old, English translations of Italian books were "sold in every shop in London."\* "The classics of antiquity were being speedily translated, as well as French and Spanish books. Translating and adapting went on at a marvellous pace." "Italian novels were found not only in every shop but in every house ; translations of them were the daily reading of Shakespeare."†

Moreover, "translations were freely handed about in manuscript."‡ Therefore, before it is positively affirmed that Shakespeare could have obtained his plots from no source but the original, it must be shown which, and how many, of these translations are lost ; not only that, but it must be proved that Shakespeare could neither have found his plots in a manuscript translation nor have received verbal accounts of them from any of his learned friends. As I have intimated elsewhere, Florio could have obtained for him all the information of this character which he required.§ Moreover, it cannot be affirmed that

\* The Scholemaster, 1570. Arber's Reprint, pp. 79, 80.

† Jusserand. The English Novel in the time of Shakespeare, pp. 74, 75, 81-85.

‡ Weiss. Wit, Humor and Shakespeare, p. 260.

§ The Baconian Comedy of Errors, chap. v.

Shakespeare could have acquired no knowledge of French, Spanish and Italian, since their attainment was not an extraordinary accomplishment, and what was easily possible to other men could not have been impossible to him.

It is not, however, Shakespeare's presumed knowledge of any language, but his actual, incomparable mastery of his native English that induces wonder and compels admiration. In his time English was untaught, was despised by those who sought fame and immortality, and by no one more despised than by Francis Bacon. He would not trust his works to its custody; he thought it would not endure; he said it would "play the bankrupt with books"; and he had *his* works carefully translated into Latin, "the universal language," because "as I have lost much time with this age, I would be glad, as God shall give me leave, to recover it with posterity."

The writer of the "Brief," says that the author of the Plays was "a jurist." "His fondness for legal phrases is remarkable."

Ben Jonson was not "a jurist," therefore, the frequent use of legal phrases does not prove that a playwright must have been "a jurist". There are more legal phrases in the Induction to Bartholomew Fair, than can be found in any of the Shakespeare Plays.

That Shakespeare was not "a jurist" is most conclusively shown by Mr. William Reynolds, in his admirable Introduction to the Merchant of Venice, Bankside Edition, page 27, from which I furnish a brief extract:

"But the third ruling of the court caps the climax, for by it Shylock is condemned and punished upon the charge of seeking 'by direct and indirect attempts' the life of a citizen, the only specification being that he had instituted a suit against Antonio which the very court condemning him had just decided in his favor, and so decided, too, upon the ground that the rendition of judgment for anything less than his whole demand would be such a bad precedent that—

'Many an error by the same example  
Will rush into the state.'

The learned counsel for the plaintiff says that the author of the Plays was "a Philosopher". He then quotes from Carlyle \* as follows :

"There is an understanding manifested in the construction of Shakespeare's Plays equal in profoundness to the great Lord Bacon's *Novum Organum*."

If the author of the "Brief" was really seeking for facts, he should have continued reading Carlyle. Upon the next page to that from which he has taken his quotation, he would have read these words :

"It is truly a lordly spectacle how this great soul takes in all kinds of men and objects, a Falstaff, an Othello, a Juliet, a Coriolanus ; sets them all forth to us in their round completeness ; loving, just, the equal brother of all. *Novum Organum*, and all the intellect you will find in Bacon, is of a quite secondary order ; earthy, material, poor in comparison with this."

2. The counsel for plaintiff in this "action of ejectment," contends that the family of Shakespeare was "grossly illiterate." He refers to Judith, one of Shakespeare's two children, but says nothing of Susanna, the other, whose intellect was superior to that of her sex, as the inscription on her tombstone in Stratford Church even now bears witness. A slight knowledge of that period, and of the men who are its boast, would have prevented the author of the "Brief" from hazarding the opinion that genius could not have had its origin in such a family. Ascham could have told him something about it ;† so could Jonson.‡

It was, surely, a mistake, on the part of the counsel for the

\* "The Hero as Poet." *Heroes, Hero Worship*, p. 93.

† The Scholemaster. Arber's Reprint, p. 51.

‡ Disc. De bonis et malis.—De innocentia.

plaintiff, after assuring us that Shakespeare's family was "grossly illiterate," to complain that they had "no settled or uniform method of spelling their name." "More than thirty different forms," he assures us, "have been found among their papers, on their tombstones, and in contemporaneous records."

Now, if the members of the family themselves wrote their name in "their papers", they were certainly not "grossly illiterate," since they could write. If they did not themselves write their name in "their papers," they can scarcely be blamed for the variations in spelling. And since we are chiefly concerned with the poet himself, it is exceedingly reassuring to find from the next sentence in the "Brief," that "Shakespeare himself wrote it invariably one way, and it appeared in his published works invariably in another." This is a clear admission that Shakespeare, at least, had a "settled and uniform method of spelling" his name.

If I rightly understand the meaning of "invariably" in the latter part of the same sentence, it signifies "not varying from," or, as Webster gives it, "without alteration or change." But what do we find in the "published works"? The quarto, "Troilus and Cresseid" (1609) was

"written by William Shakespeare."

The quartos (1598, 1608, 1615) Richard II. were written by

"William Shake-speare,"

while the quarto Lear was written by

"Mr. William Shak-speare."

This variability, however, does not perplex or surprise any one familiar with the orthography of that period. "The name of Villiers was spelled fourteen different ways in the deeds of that family. Sir Walter Rawley's name was spelled by himself in all sorts of ways. Raleigh, Raleigh, Rawleigh, Raweley and Rawly."\*

\* Orthography of proper names. D'Israeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, III., 352.

And Francis Bacon, the plaintiff, "in a letter of attorney written entirely with his own hand," signs his name "BAKON" !\*

4. "Shakespeare's handwriting," says the author of the "Brief," "was not only almost illegible, but singularly uncultivated and grotesque." The evidence for this statement consists of Shakespeare's signature, of which there are five specimens, three of these being written shortly before his death, upon the sheets of paper on which his last will and testament was written, and, very naturally, "are thought to indicate much physical debility."†

The signatures of Napoleon I., Rufus Choate, and Horace Greeley were "not only almost illegible, but singularly uncultivated and grotesque"; but he who judged of the inferiority of any of these individuals from that fact, might discover that his own intellectual powers were sadly undervalued.

But the counsel continues, and declares that Shakespeare's chirography was "wholly at variance with the description given of it by the editors of the folio edition of 1623."

The editors of the First Folio were the intimate friends, the partners and "fellowes" of Shakespeare. They could not have been mistaken about him or his handwriting. They received the Plays from him. The editors of the Folio of 1623, were the same John Hemynges and Henry Condell to each of whom Shakespeare in his last Will and Testament left "xxvi s. viij d." with which each was to buy a ring to wear in memory of him. These editors of the Folio speak of Shakespeare's manuscript in these words:

"His mind and hand went together: And what he thought he uttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers."

This evidently refers, not to any superiority of penmanship, but

\* Spedding, Letters and Life of Francis Bacon, I., 32.

† Staunton, Introd. Shakespeare, xli.

to the absence of corrections, interlineations and blots. This view of it is amply confirmed by Ben Jonson :

"I remember," he says (*Disc. De Shakspeare nostrat*), "the players have often mentioned it as an honor to Shakspeare, that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, Would he had blotted out a thousand. Which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted ; and to justify mine own candor : for I loved the man, and do honor his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any."

5. The author of the "Brief" wonders why Shakespeare made no mention of any literary property in his will. The learned counsel should have informed us what he means by "literary property." When Shakespeare made his will (A. D. 1616), there was no recognized property in the copy.\* The earliest instance of the granting of a copyright which Judge Nathaniel Holmes has discovered, was in 1622 ;† the year preceding the publication of the First Folio of Shakespeare's Plays by his "friends and fellows" John Heming and Henry Condell. The Plays were dedicated to the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, who had "treated their author living with much favor" and they, the editors, were now desirous "without ambition of either selfe-profit or fame ; only to keepe the memory of so worthy a Friend and Fellow alive as was our Shakespeare, by humble offer of his Playes to your most noble patronage."

\* "And though some right of property in the copy may have existed at common law, none was ever distinctly recognized by any legislation, nor by any reported judicial decision before the year 1640; [*"Curtis on Copyright,"* 26.] but in 1637, a decree of the Star Chamber prohibited the printing of any book or copy which the Stationers' Company, or any other person, had obtained the sole right to print, by entry in their Register; whence it may be inferred that previous to that date this right had been but little respected."  
—*Holmes, Authorship of Shakespeare*, I., 67.

† *Ibid.*, II., 714.

6. "No letter written by him has come down to us" says the author of the "Brief," "and only two addressed to him, and those making no reference to literature." This assertion might be made, with extraordinarily few exceptions, respecting any of the multitude of dramatists that made glorious the age of Elizabeth.

7. Plaintiff's counsel says: "One of the first of the Shakespeare Plays to be produced on the stage was Hamlet, and the date not later than 1587. It was founded on a foreign tragedy of which no translation then existed in English. As first presented, it was probably in an imperfect form, being subsequently rewritten and enlarged into what is now, perhaps, the greatest individual work of genius the human mind has produced. To assume that Shakespeare, at so early an age, fresh from a country town where there were few or no books, and from a family circle whose members could not read or write, was the author of this play—even in its rough state an uncut diamond—would seem to require of the laws of cause and effect a temporary suspension."

That "fact" is unique. If true, it furnishes proof that the author of the "Brief" has had access to sources of information from which every one else has been most rigidly excluded. The Germans have been studying the genesis of Hamlet for nearly a century, with exemplary patience, laborious industry, and with almost microscopical minuteness, but, as it now appears, in vain. If Dr. Robert Gericke were alive, he would wish to be dead, and Max Moltke would not survive him. But, perhaps, we may timidly assume that this "fact" is not true. The learned counsel for Bacon, in this "action of ejectment," has thoughtfully, generously, and respectfully referred us, in his Introductory, to other authorities than himself "for further information". Among these, to Judge N. Holmes, in whose "Authorship of Shakespeare" (Vol. I., p. 34), we find these words:



"The first certain knowledge that we have of this play (Hamlet), is, that it was performed at the Globe as early as 1602, having been entered, in July of that year, upon the Register of the Stationers' Company, as 'lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain's servants.' We may safely accept the conclusion of Mr. White, that there was an older play of this name by another author, which was upon the stage in London prior to this date."

This is doubly gratifying; first, because it satisfies the seeker "for further information"; secondly, because Nature may uninterruptedly pursue the even tenor of her way since "the laws of cause and effect" will not require "a temporary suspension."

8 and 9. "Setting aside Shakespeare," resumes the author of the "Brief," "Bacon was the most original, the most imaginative, and the most learned man of his time."

As we have said, the claim is not made by any competent editor of Shakespeare's Plays, that their author was the greatest scholar of the Elizabethan age. But if Francis Bacon was, as the hypothe-  
tists vigorously contend, "the most learned man of his time," "intimately acquainted with ancient and modern literature", then that fact proves, not that Bacon wrote the Plays, but that he did not. It is altogether nonsensical to affirm that the most learned man of that wonderful era would have introduced Marcus Porcius Cato, born 234 B. C., in the play of "Coriolanus"\* the events of which occurred two centuries and a half before Marcus Porcius Cato came into this "breathing world." It is no less foolish to say that he who had intimate knowledge of the classics "from the age of Plato down to his own," would have given English names to the mechanics of Ancient Greece as Shakespeare did in "A Midsummer Night's Dream."† Nor would "the most learned man" have killed Julius Cæsar "i' the Capitol" instead of in the Curia Pompeia, as Shakespeare did in Hamlet.‡ Nor would even "the most imaginative and the most learned man" have intro-

\* Coriolanus, I., 4. † Mid. Sum. Night's Dream, I., 2.

‡ Hamlet, III., 2,

duced the "devil," as Shakespeare did, in "Julius Cæsar."\* Nor could he have made Cleopatra say to Charmian, "Let us to billiards," as Shakespeare did in "Antony and Cleopatra."† Nor would he have introduced the oracle of Apollo to testify to the innocence of the daughter of the Emperor of Russia; nor would he have made Bohemia a maritime state, as Shakespeare did in "The Winter's Tale."‡ Nor would he have made Aristotle a contemporary of Priam, as Shakespeare did in "Troilus and Cressida."§

10. "The reputation of being a poet, and particularly a dramatic poet, would" says the learned counsel, "have compromised Bacon at Court."

As has been well said by Mr. Charles F. Steel (Pro-Shakespeare, p. 188), "Bacon's Essay on Love, was a thousand times more fatal to his connection with the court of Elizabeth, than any dramatic genius could have been."

11. It is said that Tobie Mathew once wrote a postscript to a letter addressed to Bacon, in acknowledgement of some "great and noble token of favor," which is assumed to have been the First Folio of the Plays. The author of the "Brief" might more reasonably assume this, if the sentence or postscript had been written as he gives it; at all events, he has given it incorrectly. Two words are substituted. "Or" in the first line should have been "and," and "it" in the second line, should have been "he." With this correction, the postscript is not so easily made capable of the interpretation he would have us put upon it. The postscript is as follows:

"The most prodigious wit that ever I knew of my nation, *and* of this side of the sea, is of your lordship's name, though *he* be known by another."

\* Julius Cæsar, I., 2.

† Antony and Cleopatra, II., 5.

‡ The Winter's Tale, III., 2, 3.

§ Troilus and Cressida, II., 2.

(p. 156) He laughs at "its preposterous incredibility." (p. 169) The supposition that Bacon wrote the Plays "is too monstrously absurd to merit this serious examination of its possibility."

(p. 177) He concludes by recommending that ambulances with horses ready harnessed should be provided, and that on the first manifestation of the "craze," the Baconian hypothetist should be hurriedly removed to an insane asylum in order that the world may be protected from his foolish twaddle.

The learned counsel refers to "the group of salutatory phrases which the *Promus* contains, such as good morning, good-day and good-night, which had not then come into use in England, but which occur four hundred and nineteen times in the Plays." Counsel sagaciously adds, that we are doubtless indebted to Bacon for these little amenities of speech!

But facts contradict "facts." Here are some "salutatory phrases":

"Bed-rid upon a couche low he lay:  
*Deus hic*; quoth he; O Thomas friend, good-day.  
 Said this friar all courteously and soft."

"Hail Master Nicholay,  
 Good-morrow, I see thee well for it is day."

The learned counsel "in this action of ejectment" should have stated the date of the *Promus*, when, he said, the phrases good-morning, good-day, had *not then* come into use in England. The date was 1594-5. The instances which I have just given of the use of these salutatory phrases in England, are taken, the first from the *Sompnoure's Tale*, and the second from the *Miller's Tale*, both written by Chaucer nearly two centuries before Bacon was born.

13. In 1867, resumes the author of the "Brief," there was discovered "a box containing old papers, among which were some manuscripts of Francis Bacon, bound together in the form

of a volume. The table of contents names two compositions known to be Bacon's; two of the Shakespeare Plays, Richard II. and Richard III.; though the Plays have been taken from the book." Judge Holmes adds the following piece of information respecting this discovery:

"The blank space at the side and between the titles is scribbled all over with various words, letters, phrases, and scraps of verse in English and Latin, as if the copyist were merely trying his pen and writing down whatever came into his head. Among these scribbles, beside the name of Francis Bacon several times, the name of William Shakespeare is written eight or nine times over. It is also at least a singular coincidence that the extraordinary word, 'honorificabilitudino,' found here, but not in any dictionary then issued, occurs in *Love's Labor's Lost*."

We will add, that the name of Thomas Nash also was scribbled there, and that among the titles occurs "The Isle of Dogs," a piece by Nash. "There is no trace of Bacon's penmanship," Mr. Spedding, his biographer, says, and concludes, naturally, that the scribbling was the work of a copyist; and we may venture to assume, one who had copied the works whose titles he had scribbled. Thus, Bacon's Essays would naturally incline him to write Bacon's name. Just as naturally, Richard II. and Richard III. would incline him to write Shakespeare's name; and again, just as naturally, "The Isle of Dogs" would incline him to write the name of Thomas Nash. But "honorificabilitudino"? Well, that would occur to the copyist from the writing of Nash's name, for the "extraordinary word" is found in "Lenten Stuffe," of which Thomas Nash was the author, a fact of which Judge Holmes does not seem to have been aware, or he would not have made such an elaborate argument about it.

14. Counsel for plaintiff maintains that Bacon refrained from acknowledging the authorship of the Shakespeare Plays, because

such authorship was disreputable. But the fact remains that Bacon did write a masque, and a sonnet to Queen Elizabeth's "eyebrow" when the virgin was nearly three score years and ten. When Elizabeth was dead, he may well have desired Sir John Davis, who was indeed a poet, to be good to him and conceal that fact from James VI., who was then on his way from Scotland to ascend the English throne ; but it nowhere appears that Bacon was desirous of any concealment other than that. The hypothetists, however, insist upon another interpretation of it ; they maintain that Bacon's request in his letter to Sir John Davis, who had gone to meet the King, to "be good to concealed poets" meant that Bacon was the author of the Shakespeare Plays, and "half proves" their case. But my hypothetic friends, that letter does not half prove your case, but entirely destroys it. "The Letter," Mr. Spedding says, "is not marked Private, and the body of it is in the hand of one of his men." Now if Bacon took such enormous pains to preserve his secret, as Donnelly says he did ; and if "he was determined that his secret should die with him," as Judge Holmes thinks he was, would Bacon have blurted it abroad in such a foolhardy way as that ? It is clear, therefore, either that the letter will not bear the interpretation which the hypothetists insist upon, or that Bacon had no "secret" which he was particularly anxious to keep.

15. "Stratford, the home of Shakespeare", says the learned counsel, "is not referred to in any of the Plays, nor is the beautiful river Avon on which it is situated ; but St. Albans, the residence of Bacon, is mentioned twenty-three times. Tender memories of Yorke Place, where Bacon was born, and of the County of Kent, the home of his father's ancestry are conspicuous in more than one of the Historical Plays."

If it is necessary that a dramatist to own his plays should make mention of his birthplace in them, Shakespeare was certainly re-

miss in that. If it is necessary that he should mention one of his residences, he was not remiss in that. The best part of Shakespeare's life was spent in London. If the argument were good, London would not have been mentioned. St. Albans, by the way, does not occur in the Historical Plays, because it was Bacon's birth-place, for Bacon was not born there; but because the events occurred there which Shakespeare related in connection with the Historical Plays. But the hypothetic counsel will say, What about the "Tender memories of Yorke Place, where Bacon was born"? Well, Bacon was not born at Yorke Place, and there are absolutely no "tender memories" in the Shakespeare Plays, of the place where Bacon was born. Yorke Place stood where Whitehall now stands. *Yorke House*, where Bacon was born and where he lived, was on the other side of Charing Cross, in the Strand, and was as distinct from Yorke Place as Harvard College is from the State House in Boston.

16. "Ben Jonson was Bacon's private secretary." This is a dangerous admission. There is much more evidence, and infinitely more reason and probability to support the conclusion, that Jonson wrote Bacon's works, than that Bacon wrote Shakespeare's. And, if the hypothetists enjoy giving the authorship of one man's works to another, we advise them to study the "facts" which have been furnished for their special edification in a series of articles lately published in *Shakespeariana*.\*

The author of the "Brief" says that the inscription composed by Ben Jonson, and printed opposite Shakespeare's portrait in the Folio 1623, is an "exquisite satire." He gives an extract:

"O, could he but have drawn his wit  
As well in brasse, as he hath hit  
His face, the print would then surpass  
All that was ever writ in brasse."

\* "Did Ben Jonson write Bacon's works?"

It is reasonable to assume that counsel for plaintiff was not aware of the fact that what Jonson wrote elsewhere, forbids the supposition of any "exquisite satire," and that counsel did not know that portraits were engraved on brass and copper, and that it was a common practice to draw effigies of the dead, and write inscriptions to their memory upon plates of brass which were inlaid upon the walls and floors of churches.

17. The counsel for the plaintiff states that "Bacon's authorship of the Plays was not unsuspected during his lifetime. When he was appointed by the Queen to join in the prosecution of Essex for treason, and was assigned to that count of the indictment which charged connivance with the play-actors in producing the play of Richard II., he protested on the ground that his name was already bruited about in that connection, and that it would now be said of him, in derision, that he gave in evidence *his own tales*. These rumors could have originated only in the recognized inadequacy of the reputed authorship."

Now, the counsel for plaintiff cannot adduce any sufficient reason for affirming that "these rumors could have originated only in the recognized inadequacy of the reputed authorship" of Shakespeare's Plays. His assertion is marvellously reckless in view of his statement in the very next paragraph that "among the great men who made that age famous, no one seems to have taken any notice either of Shakespeare or of the sublime creations which bear his name." If Shakespeare's inadequacy were *recognized*, it must have been known to some of the "great men," and to many of the contemporary dramatists. The learned counsel may safely be challenged to name them. The whole paragraph, however, shows what a confused state the mind of the author of the "Brief" was in, when he wrote it. He could not have read carefully anything concerning the "facts" which he attempts to discuss. When Essex was charged with connivance with the play-

actors in producing the Richard II., Bacon did not say that it "would now be said of him, in derision, that he gave in evidence *his own tales*." That was stated in connection with the publication of Hayward's book, of the History of Henry IV., which was dedicated to Essex, and the dedication of which was an incident of the examination of Essex before the Lords Commissioners the year before his insurrection, trial for treason, and connivance with the play-actors who produced Richard II. On this last trial, however, Bacon read some letters of Essex', which he, Bacon, produced in evidence in order to intensify the feelings of the courtiers against the prisoner. Upon which, Essex did summon "Francis Bacon to witness against Francis Bacon," and revealed the astounding fact that Bacon had advised the writing of the letters which he had dared to put in evidence ; nay, that even he, Bacon, wrote them.

Now, every hypothetist has admitted that Essex must have been in the "secret" of the authorship of the Plays, if there was any, and can any reasonable being imagine that if Bacon had written the play of Richard II., which he charged Essex with having connived at in order to promote his insurrection, Essex would have remained silent, when the revelation of the "secret" would have ruined Bacon and have covered the prosecution with shame and ignominy? Essex did not accuse Bacon of being the author of Richard II., and did not accuse him of it, because it was not true.

The learned counsel says : "The most astonishing feature of this controversy is the light it has thrown on the literature of the Elizabethan age." In view of his assistance in this direction the statement is amusing. "Among the great men," counsel resumes, "who made that age famous, no one seems to have taken any notice either of Shakespeare or of the sublime creations which bear his name. Bacon's silence, itself very significant, is ex-



plained ; but what shall we say of Raleigh, Sydney, Hooker, Drake, Hobbes, Walton, Herbert, Pym, and the rest? Imagine the inhabitants of Lilliput paying no attention to Gulliver !”

Perhaps it has not, even yet, occurred to the author of the “Brief,” that the silence of at least half of the great men whom he has named is very easily understood. Thus, Pym, the greatest politician of his time, was too busy in pursuit of kingcraft, injustice and “Thorough,” to pause to write upon a subject entirely alien to him ; his political speeches comprising his whole literary work. Hooker was an ecclesiastic, and died within two years from the date of Shakespeare’s first acknowledged play. Drake died (1595–6) before Shakespeare was publicly known as a dramatist ; and Sydney died (1586) before Shakespeare had written anything.

But Chettle took notice of him, so did Meres and Weever ; Hugh Holland mentioned him, so did John Denham ; so did Howell, the famous author of *Epistolæ Ho-Eliañæ* ; so did Buck, the author of the *History and Reign of Richard III.* ; so did Digges, so did Mayne, so did Basse ; so did Lowin, Robinson, Swanston, Clearke, Hammerton, Taylor, Benfield, Pollard, Allen and Boyd, the players who dedicated the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher to the surviving brother of “the incomparable pair,” to whom the First Folio was dedicated by Shakespeare’s friends and fellows, Heming and Condell. Sir Aston Cockayne spoke of him ; so did the magnanimous Heywood ; Massinger was termed “one of Shakespeare’s Life-guards” ; Jonson declared he loved him almost to idolatry ; so did Sir William Davenant, Jonson’s successor as Poet-laureate, who boasted that he was Shakespeare’s illegitimate son. Webster, “the noble-minded,” paid a glorious tribute to him ; so did Fuller, and so did Milton.

In the second edition of the “Brief,” the learned counsel for

Bacon has made some additions and alterations, but has continued to sacrifice facts and his client in the same impotently innocent way. There is only one additional statement which requires attention; and that, inversely as its merit. The author of the "Brief for Plaintiff," says that "Bacon was remarkably painstaking in all the minutæ of his work." This assertion is so positively made that it is almost a pity to find it untrue. We learn, however, from Mr. Spedding, Bacon's latest and best biographer, that Bacon was so careless or ignorant of the contents of writings of which he claimed to be the author, as to place impossible dates upon them.\* He was, moreover, suspected of not being the author of the *Novum Organum*, as we know by a letter from Buckingham to Bacon himself;† and the *Essays* are written in a hand not Bacon's.‡ Indeed, most of the papers and writings attributed to Bacon are in the handwriting of some one else, with the heading only by himself.§ Some of Bacon's posthumous essays are ascribed by the same high authority to Sir Thomas Browne, the author of "*Religio Medici*"; "rashly, I think," said Mr. O'Connor, "for how should any of Sir Thomas Browne's manuscripts have gotten among Lord Bacon's private papers?"|| But that ardent Baconian did not know that the seeming mystery was easily explicable; did not know that *Discourses*, *Treatises*, *Histories*, which have "always passed for Bacon's," and which are, even now, included in his alleged works, such as "NOTES ON THE PRESENT STATE OF CHRISTENDOM,"¶ "THE ADVICE TO VILLIERS,"\*\*\* "A BRIEF DISCOURSE TOUCHING THE LOW COUNTRIES, THE KING OF SPAIN, THE KING OF SCOTS, THE FRENCH KING, AND QUEEN ELIZABETH, WITH SOME REMARKABLE PASSAGES OF

\* Letters and Life of Francis Bacon, Spedding, IV., 115.

† Ibid., VII., 438. ‡ Ibid., IV., 340. § Ibid., IV., 96, 97.

|| Mr. Donnelly's Reviewers, p. 30.

¶ Letters and Life of Francis Bacon, Spedding, I., 16.

\*\* Ibid., VI., 12-54.

